

Narrative of Andrew J. Vieau, Sr.

NARRATIVE OF ANDREW J. VIEAU, SR.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE EDITOR.¹

1 Upon the 13th and 14th of June, 1887, the editor, while at Fort Howard, obtained from the lips of Andrew Jacques Vieau, Sr., this narrative of his recollections of early times in Wisconsin. The arrangement and language are largely the editor's, but the statements are strictly those of Mr. Vieau, who, though in the seventieth year of his age, appeared at the time of the interview to be in full possession of his faculties, mental and physical, and enjoying the complete confidence of his friends and neighbors. Unfortunately, his father, Jacques Vieau, left the son no documents, so that statements by the latter concerning Jacques are based on oral family tradition; but as to their truth he is most positive, claiming to have a distinct remembrance of what was told him by his parents, who spent the later years of their life in his neighborhood. It will be seen that Mr. Vieau narrates many interesting events in his own career, which are not mentioned in any of the published histories of the lake-shore counties. Because of this, the editor has been at much pains to ascertain the soundness of the narrator's memory, and is pleased to say that in cases where he has been enabled to gain outside evidence, direct or presumptive, on the point at issue, it has been invariably in Mr. Vieau's favor; while a large number of MS. letters addressed to the latter by John Lawe, Solomon Juneau and others, together with commissions and miscellaneous documents, presented to the Society by Mr. Vieau, in November, 1887, are also corroborative of his statements. An oil portrait of the narrator, painted in Milwaukee, in 1839, by Geo. P. A. Healey, can be seen in the Society's portrait gallery.— Ed.

My father was Jacques Vieau, the first man to engage in the Indian trade on the ground now occupied by the city of Milwaukee.² The family name was originally De Veau; but as

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that meant calf or veal, other children would annoy my ancestors in their youth, by bleating in their presence; so the name was changed to Vieau in self-defense. My

2 An error. There were, off and on, several traders at the mouth of the Milwaukee river previous to the arrival of Jacques Vieau: chief among them, Alexander la Framboise, who commenced his trade in 1785. See Buck's *Pioneer Hist. Milwaukee*, i., p. 10; *Hist. Milwaukee Co.* (West. Hist. Co., 1881), p. 56; Back's *Milwaukee Under the Charter*, iii., appendix; *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, i., pp. 35, 134; *Mag. West. Hist.*, pp. 639, 757; also *ante*, p. 210, where traders are mentioned as being at Milwaukee in 1779.— Ed.

219 father's paternal grandfather was somehow mixed up with the Huguenots and came to New Franco during the oppression of those people in the old country. I do not think he was a Huguenot himself, however. I have heard that my father's great-uncle was governor of Marseilles at that time. Father, who was a full blooded Frenchman, was born in lower Canada,—in Cour de Neige (or Snow-Court) in the suburbs of Montreal, May 5, 1757; and died on private land claim No. 14 (west side of Fox river) at Fort Howard, in what is now the town of Ashwaubenou, July 1, 1852. His remains lie buried in the French Catholic cemetery at Shanty Town.

My mother was married to my father in 1786, at Green Bay. Her name was Angeline, daughter of Joseph le Roy, then a trader at the Bay. She was the niece of Onaugesa, a Pottawattomie chief, her mother's brother.¹ Their children, in order of birth, were as follows: Madeleine,² Josette,³ Paul,⁴ Jacques,⁵ Louis,⁶ Joseph,⁷ Amable,⁸ Charles,⁹ Andrew

¹ Augustin Grignon says (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, iii., pp. 290, 291) that Onaugesa was a Menomonee, with a Pottawattomie wife, and a brother of Mrs. Joseph le Roy. His village was at Milwaukee.— Ed.

² Died at Stevens Point in 1878, as Mrs. Thibeau, aged 78.— Ed.

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3 Josette, the wife of Solomon Juneau, was Vieau's daughter by another consort, the narrator afterwards informed me, but was reared in the Vieau family on an equal footing with the others.— Ed.

4 Died in Kansas in 1865.— Ed.

5 Kept the Cottage inn in Milwaukee for several years, commencing in 1835; died in Kansas in 1875; his one child, a daughter, became the wife of Indian Agent George L. Young, in that state. Many writers on Milwaukee history confound Jacques Vieau, Jr., the keeper of the Cottage (or Triangle) inn, with his father. Few pioneers who arrived in Milwaukee subsequent to 1835 ever knew the elder Jacques, the trader of 1795, who retired to Green Bay in 1836, at the age of 74 years, and was never thereafter in active life. His son, of the same name, commenced business in Milwaukee at about the time the old man retired; hence, the confusion of pioneer reminiscences relative to the two Jacques is not strange.— Ed.

6 Afterwards became chief of the Pottawattomies in Kansas, and died there in 1876, leaving a large estate in lands, cattle and money.— Ed.

7 Died near Green Bay, in 1879, aged 75 years, leaving seven children.— Ed.

8 Became noted among the fur-traders of the Milwaukee district; died October 31, 1887, at his home in Muskego, Waukesha county; at the time of his death, he was reported in the newspapers to be 97 years of age, nearly twenty years older than he was.— Ed.

9 Died in Kansas in 1876.— Ed.

220 (myself), Nicholas,¹ Peter² and Mary,—a round dozen in all. Mother died at the home of my brother Joseph, in the town of Lawrence, Brown county, January 7, 1862, aged about 105 years.³

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1 Born in Milwaukee, “just opposite the present stock-yards,” in 1826.— Ed.

2 Born on the same spot, January 10, 1830.— Ed.

3 Cf. statements of Amable Vieau, in *Hist. Milw. Co.*, pp. 70–73. In regard to the statement in that work (p. 71), that the wife of Jacques Vieau, Sr., was “the daughter of a sister to a Pottawattomie chief,” the narrator writes me, under date of Fort Howard, October 27, 1887: “As I told you when here, my father married the daughter of Joseph le Roy, not the daughter of an Indian chief; but my grandfather Le Roy married the daughter of an Indian chief, as I have always understood—Akeeneebaway (Standing Earth). That is what my grandmother Le Roy and my mother always told me.” A Menomonee therein named Ahkenepaweh (Earth Standing) signed the Stambaugh treaty of February 8, 1831.— Ed.

My father first went to Mackinaw, from Montreal, as a voyageur for the Northwest Fur company, in 1793,⁴ when he was 42 years of age. His first trip in that capacity was to La Pointe, in Chequamegon bay, Lake Superior. In 1794, he returned to La Pointe, but this time as a clerk for the company. In 1795, he was appointed as one of the company's agents, being sent out with a supply of goods to explore and establish posts on the west shore of Lake Michigan. The goods were contained in a large Mackinaw boat, heavily loaded and manned by twelve men. He, with his family, —consisting, then, of mother, Madeleine, Paul and Jacques,—followed in a large bark canoe, in which was also stored the camping equipage. My father's clerk, on that trip, was Mike le Pettéel.

4 *Hist. Milw. Co.* says (p. 71) he went there as early as 1776, which is more likely. — Ed.

The expedition started from Mackinaw in July. The first important camping place, furnishing a good harbor, was where Kewaunee is now situated. My father, I am told, established a “jack-knife” post near there, to open the trade, and left a man in charge of it. Father was called Jean Beau by the Indians,⁵ and the creek upon which his post

5 He was commonly styled Jean Vieau, by his English and American acquaintances.— Ed.

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221 was situated was called Jean Beau creek by the Ottawas. Several Ottawas and Chippewas have told me that he established such a post there, and have described the location to me, as being on the north side of the creek, which is a tributary of the North [East] Twin river, and about nine miles from Lake Michigan.¹ He established a post, as well, at Sheboygan, at which he also left a Clerk. This place was at the foot of the rapids, on the north side, and has been pointed out to me by Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. He also located a post, with a clerk, at Manitowoc, very near the rapids; and perhaps at other points along the lake shore, but I cannot recollect any details concerning them, if I ever was informed.

¹ I am informed by George Grimmer, of Kewaunee, that Henry Tisch, of that place, and formerly of Mishicott, Manitowoc county, "has an old map of Manitowoc county, in which Jambeau creek is laid down as entering the East Twin river from the northwest, in section 25, town 21, range 23 east." This is the same creek laid down in Snyder, Van Vechten & Co.'s map of Manitowoc county (1878), and Nicodemus & Conover's wall-map of Wisconsin (1878), as Mauvais creek. Mr. Tisch informs Mr. Grimmer that there is "an old tradition that there was an old Indian trading post on section 28, town 21, range 23 east." Both the mouth of Mauvais creek and the traditional site of the trading post are in the town of Gibson, one of the northern tier of Manitowoc-county towns. The probability is that Vieau's post was in section 27 instead of 28. The distance from Lake Michigan to that point, in a direct line, west by south, from Two Creeks, is nine miles, as Mr. Vieau says; but from Kewaunee harbor it is some sixteen or eighteen miles overland to the southwest. Two Creeks was doubtless the supply harbor for the "jack-knife" establishment.— Ed.

My father's expedition arrived at Milwaukee on either the 18th or 20th of August. He met at the mouth of the river a large number of Pottawattomies, but mingling freely with them were Sacs and Foxes, and a few Winnebagoes who had married into the other three tribes. The Indians told my father that he was the first white man whom they had seen there, and he was Warmly welcomed. He had a good stock of goods, and French traders were always particularly well received at the outposts of civilization, in those days. He

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erected two log buildings, one for a dwelling and the other for a warehouse, a mile and a half up the Menomonee river, on the south side, at the foot of the lime ridge. During the late 222 civil war, the site of this building was owned by James W. Larkin.¹ I was in Milwaukee during that period, and the places where the store and dwelling had stood were plainly visible, from the remains of banks of earth which had surrounded them.²

¹ Wheeler's *Chronicles of Milwaukee* (1861), p. 23.— Ed.

² It will be noticed that nowhere does the narrator mention Jean Baptiste Mirandeu, who is reported in all existing histories of Milwaukee to have been in Jacques Vieau's company. In answer to later questions relative to his recollections of Mirandeu, I have letters from A. J. Vieau, dated October 27 and 29, 1887, in which he says in substance: "I never heard my father say that Jean B. Mirandeu went to Milwaukee in his company. I never heard him say what time Mirandeu arrived there. I am of the opinion that Mirandeu came after my father, but not long after. He was never in any sort of partnership with my father. I have heard my father and mother and older brothers all say that Mirandeu carried on blacksmithing and did father's work, whenever engaged to do it, like any other mechanic; he was, from my father's account of him, a very good man, but had one bad fault—he drank whisky, and that was the cause of his death. Mirandeu married a Pottawattomie squaw [Cf. *Hist. Milw. Co.*, p. 66], with whom he lived till his death in the spring of 1819. After his death, she and her children went to live among the Pottawattomies again—except Victoria, who was raised by the Kinzies, in Chicago, and in 1822 married a Canadian named Joseph Perthier. Mrs. Porthier is still living in the town of Lake, near Milwaukee. I think nearly all Mirandeu's sons and daughters married Indians. Louis was alive fifteen years ago, near Grand Rapids, Wis. I haven't heard of him since. Several of the others went with the Pottawattomies to Kansas, in 1837. Mirandeu was buried on the slope of the hill, on what is now the northeast corner of Main and Michigan streets. When, in 1837 or 1838, Michigan street was being graded, Solomon Juneau told the workmen to take care of Mirandeu's bones, their resting place being marked by a wooden cross. I was standing near the grave, with others, when the blacksmith's skull came tumbling down

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the bank, the place having been opened with a pick. The greater part of the hair was still attached to the skull, and some one remarked that the reason for this was that Mirandeu had drunk so much poor whisky that he had become sort of pickled. I do not know how much truth there was in this remark. The rest of the bones came down almost immediately after, and all the remains were picked up by Juneau's orders, put in a box and placed in the regular cemetery. Mirandeu was, as I understand, a tallish, thinnish man; he had a blonde complexion and his hair was very light."

In Buck's *Milwaukee Under the Charter*, iii., pp. 477, 479, 480, are interesting statements regarding Mirandeu and his wife, from their children, Victoria and Josette.— Ed.

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My father remained at his post during the winter of 1795–96; and, indeed, every winter thereafter for two or three years. Several members of our family were born there,— Joseph, Louis, Amable, Charles, Nicholas and Peter. Each spring, after packing up the winter's peltries and buying all the maple sugar obtainable from the Indians,¹ father would start out with his family and goods on his return to Mackinaw, after leaving a clerk in charge of the post, to superintend the planting of potatoes and corn and the purchase of what were called "summer" furs. These were the "red skin," or summer skin, of the deer; this was the only summer fur that was good for anything, for all other animals shed their hair during that season. Upon his return down the lake, father would stop at his various jack-knife posts and collect their furs and maple sugar, and often relieve the men stationed there, by substituting others for them. This trip to Mackinaw would, with fair weather, take about a month. He would set out on his return, in August, distributing goods to the lake-shore posts, and stay at Milwaukee until May again. Thus, he did not abandon any of his posts; he was not doing a roving business, but was in possession of the establishments the entire time.

¹ For account of sugar-making among Indians, see Schoolcraft's *Hist. etc., Indian Tribes of U. S.*, ii., p. 55.— Ed.

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Still in general charge of the lake-shore posts, but not personally supplying them, he was ordered to the Fox-Wisconsin portage in 1797 or 1798, and thither he went with his family, remaining there in the fur company's behalf for two or three seasons.² Then he returned to Milwaukee and resumed his former mode of life there,—going to either Mackinaw

² I do not find elsewhere any reference to Jacques Vieau being stationed at the Fox-Wisconsin portage, but the narrator is positive on this score. From 1812 to 1818, approximately. Francis le Roy, the elder Vieau's brother-in-law, had a transportation plant there. It will be seen from Antoine le Clair's statement, *post*, that the Le Clairs arrived at Milwaukee river in 1800 and found no white man there, except Mirandeu, the blacksmith. The Vieaus were doubtless at the Portage, at the time. The narrator does not know when his family returned to Milwaukee, but it was doubtless not earlier than 1802. — Ed.

224 or Green Bay, each spring, with long-shore goods and returning in the fall.¹ His clerk, during this period of his career, was one La Jeunesse. In 1818, while at Mackinaw, the company detailed Laurent Solomon Juneau as my father's clerk; and thus it was that Juneau, then 21 years of age, arrived at the Milwaukee river in August of that year, in my father's company. The next year, father withdrew as agent of what had by that time become the American Fur company, and procured the agency for Juneau, who had in the meantime married my half-sister Josette.

¹ See Lawe and Grignon papers, *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, x., and letters of Dickson and others, *post*, for references to Vieau's services in behalf of the British, during the war of 1812–15. He is therein styled *Jean Vieau*.— Ed.

My father had, for many years before this, considered Green Bay his home. He had a farm there and I and several other members of the family were born upon the home-stead, which was private land claim No. 14 on the west bank of the Fox river. Juneau's home also became Green Bay, and remained such until about 1834 or 1835, when Milwaukee began to grow and Juneau platted the village and settled there permanently. Juneau was one of the last to recognize that Milwaukee was destined to become a permanent settlement, and

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had to be persuaded by his friends into taking advantage of the fact. Green Bay remained as his home and that of my father, despite their business interests at Milwaukee. From about 1810, forward, the family would frequently remain at the Bay during the winters, while father was off among the Indians.

After disposing of his interests to Juneau, in 1819, my father was equipped by Michael Dousman, of Chicago, and for several years traded at his old post on the Menomonee river, near the bluff.² He was an active man, very prompt

² In *Amer. State Papers*, vi. (*Indian Affairs*, ii.), pp. 360, 361, there is an extract from a letter by Matthew Irwin, U. S. factor at Green Bay, to Thomas L. McKenney, superintendent of Indian trade, as follows: "October 6, 1821.— Mr. Kinzie, son to the Indian sub-agent at Chicago, and *agent for the American Fur Company*, has been detected in selling large quantities of whisky to the Indians, at or near Milwauky of Lake Michigan; in consequence of which, the Indian agent at Chicago directed him to close his concerns at Milwauky in sixty days, and then leave the place. Some Indians from that place represented to me that they would be badly off for a trader, should Mr. Kenzie leave them; in consequence of which, I engaged Mr. Vieau, a citizen of the United States, and a professed Indian trader, to repair there for the purpose of supplying the wants of the Indians. I have supplied him with \$2,228.25 worth of goods, and have agreed to allow him \$200 from the time of his departure till his return next spring, with an allowance of some coarse clothing and subsistence. Two boat-men and two boys will receive, altogether, \$200, with some coarse clothing and subsistence. Mr. Vieau is well known here for his integrity, and possesses property enough here to cover the whole amount with which I have entrusted him."— Ed.

225 and precise in his business dealings and sociable in his manner, so that he commanded much influence with the Pottawattomies. In the winter of 1832–33, the small-pox scourge ran through the Indian population of the state. Father and his crew were busy throughout the winter in burying the natives, who died off like sheep with the foot-rot. With a crooked stick inserted under a dead Indian's chin they would haul the infected

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corpse into a shallow pit dug for its reception and give it a hasty burial. In this work, and in assisting the poor wretches who survived, my father lost much time and money; while of course none of the Indians who lived over, were capable of paying their debts to the traders. This winter ruined my father almost completely; and in 1836, aged 74 years, he removed to his homestead in Green Bay, where his father-in law, Joseph le Roy, still lived.

I was born in Green Bay in 1818, on the west shore of the Fox river, on private claim No. 14,— in the present town of Ashwaubenon. I went to the French school kept by John B. Jacobs¹ about the year 1826 or 1827. Mr. Jacobs having abandoned the undertaking a year or two after, J. B. Dupré, originally of Detroit, and a soldier discharged from the first troops that came here under Col. John Miller in 1816, became

¹ Mr. Jacobs settled in Green Bay about the year 1800. An Englishman by birth, he originally had large landed possessions in Canada, but appears to have lost them through the trickery of a brother. On arrival at Green Bay, he attempted to retrieve his fortunes in the fur trade. He married Miss Marinette Chevallier. He returned to Canada about 1827, and sought to regain his property, but without success, and died there in 1850.— Ed.

²²⁶ his successor. Dupré's French school was on claim No. 10, on the west side. After some time with Dupré, I was instructed at home by my father's old clerk, Pettéel. My next teacher was Captain Dinwiddie, who taught on the east side of the river, at the foot of Judge Morgan L. Martin's present garden. Gen. Albert G. Ellis then instructed me for a year or two; he kept his school on the south side of Astor, on the Louis Grignon claim. Father Fauvel was also my teacher for a time, his chapel and school being within four or five rods east of where the Green Bay water-works pumping station now is. Rev. R. F. Cadle, the Episcopalian missionary, came in 1830; he was a very fine gentleman, and I went to his excellent mission school in company with my brothers, Nicholas and Peter.

There I remained until 1832, when I went to clerk for R. and A. J. Irwin, at their general store and postoffice in Shanty Town. Robert Irwin was the postmaster and I served as his deputy. This was during the Black Hawk war, and I well remember the soldiers coming

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down the Fox river with Black Hawk in 1833, on his tour to the east. The Irwins failed in 1834, and I went on to Milwaukee to clerk for my brother-in-law, Solomon Juneau, who was agent for the American Fur company. There was nobody there at the time, except the Juneau family,¹ which was established at what is now the junction of Wisconsin street and East Water street,—the warehouse being on the northeast corner and the log dwelling on the northwest. Juneau's family then consisted of his wife, Narcisse, Thérèse, Paul, Harriet and Frank. Eugène was born afterward. Juneau was doing a fine business in those days. I think that the company allowed him one-half the profits as a commission.

¹ The narrator is at fault here. He has in view impressions gained some years previous. Albert Fowler arrived Nov. 12, 1883; and when Horace Chase arrived, thirteen months later, he found four settlers, in addition to the Juneaus.—Buck's *Pion. Hist. Milw.*, i., pp. 12–15. and map, p. 20; also read *Id.*, chap. iv., for a detailed topographical description of Milwaukee, as it appeared in 1836.— Ed.

The Indians were principally Pottawattomies. Those who were at what came afterwards to be called Walker's point, on the south shore of Milwaukee river, were considerably 227 intermixed with Sacs and Winnebagoes. They were lazy fellows, as a rule, and preferred to hunt and fish all summer long, to cultivating corn. They were noted players of the moccasin game and lacrosse,¹ were heavy gamblers and given to debauchery. In the winter time, these fellows scattered through the woods, divided into small hunting parties, and often Walker's point was practically deserted. But in the summer, there was a large settlement here, the bark wigwams housing from a thousand to twelve hundred Indians of all ages and conditions. On the old Juneau marsh,—where are now Water, Main, Milwaukee, Jefferson and Jackson streets,—Indian ponies would graze in great droves in the earlier years, I am told, it being then a quite dry meadow; but as far back as I can remember it, say 1823, it was flooded, and the home of countless water-fowl. The Spring-street flat, from the river back to the bordering highlands, the Indians had under quite excellent cultivation. There was scarcely a grub to be seen in the entire field. On the lime ridge, there was a big Indian settlement. Some of the Indian families there would raise

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as much as one hundred and fifty bushels of corn and a considerable store of potatoes; they were quite industrious and counted as honest,—in striking contrast to what we used to call “the Walker-point rogues.” On the Kinnikinnick river, there was a small band of one hundred and fifty or two hundred Pottawattomies. The Walker-point chief of my day was Pauschkenana (The Ruptured). He was a short, thick-set, ugly-looking fellow, with a vicious disposition and a broken nose, in which latter was inserted a piece of lead to keep the cartilage in position. He was much feared by the rest of his band, as he pretended to be a sorcerer. He died about 1830. When my father came to Milwaukee, the grandfather of this chief was the head man of the village. On the west side of the Milwaukee, on the Spring-street flat, opposite Juneau's place, the chief was Kenozhaykum (Lake Pickerel); on the lime ridge, Pohquaygeegun

1 See Paquette's description of moccasin game, “Wisconsin Winnebagoes,” *post.*— Ed.

228 (Bread)¹ held full Sway; while Oseebwaisum (Corn Stalk) was the chief of the band on the Kinnikinnick. A petty chief called Palmaipottoke (The Runner) was stationed with a small party between Walker's point and the Menomonee.

1 Not to be confounded with Daniel Bread, head chief of the Oneidas near Green Bay.— Ed.

Arriving at Juneau's in September, 1834, I remained with him until the following February, when I went to Chicago, to clerk for Medore B. Beaubien, a merchant there. I succeeded in this new position a Mr. Saxton, who had gone to Racine to do business there. There were several clerks in Beaubien's store, and I was at the head of them. I stayed in Chicago until September, 1836, when the last payment treaty was made. Chicago was very small, then. The principal store was kept by Oliver Newberry and George W. Dole,² on South Water street, corner of Dearborn. Beaubien's store occupied the opposite corner. Major John Greene was commandant at Fort Dearborn, with perhaps one company of soldiers. Gen. Hugh Brady's son was sutler. J. B. Beaubien, father of my employer, lived in the old American Fur company's post, south of Dearborn street, on the lake shore. From a

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half to three quarters of a mile further along the lake shore, was Col. Thomas J. V. Owen, who was Indian agent and lived in an old log house which served as the agency building. Walter Kimball and —Porter were on South Water street, three or four lots west of the Dearborn street crossing. Peter Pruyne kept a drug store next door to Kimball and Porter. Another man named Kimball had a store further on. Boilvin and Le Beau had quite a large confectionery establishment, corner of Clark and South Water streets. Among the smaller shops, I remember: Peter Cohen, clothing and dry goods, two doors east of Newberry and Dole; James Mulford, jeweler, close to us on the same side. The Tremont house was the only hotel. There were, perhaps, from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and fifty buildings in Chicago, shops and all, at the time of which I speak. They were mostly unpainted and there was certainly

2 *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vii., p. 338.— Ed.

229 no promise of the place ever amounting to anything. On the streets, mud was knee deep; and wagons had often to be lifted out of the mire with handspikes. I am sure that nearly every inhabitant of the place would have smiled incredulously if any one had prophesied that here was to be the great city of the west. Among the people there at that time, were the Kinzies, the Gordons, Hubbards and Shermans. But I was so young that I did not mingle with people generally, and became acquainted only with those among whom I was thrown in a business way.

On returning to Juneau's post, I served as his bookkeeper until December, (1836), when I bought him out. Perhaps it was November, but I think December was the month. The agency had been abolished, and I started in business for myself on the west side of the river, a half block north of Spring street. There had been a big rush to Milwaukee while I was in Chicago, and it continued unabated during the fall of 1836. Some of the men who afterwards became most prominent in its affairs, arrived during this period. George P. Delaplaine, now of Madison, then a young man, became my clerk early in 1837.¹

1 See George P. Delaplaine's statement, *post.*— Ed.

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On the 7th of February, 1837, I married, in Green Bay, Rebecca R. Lawe, second daughter of John Lawe, by whom I have had nine children; eight of whom are living. My wife was born in Green Bay in 1815, at the old Lawe trading post, and is still living with me. Our bridal trip was made across the country to Milwaukee, on what was called a "French train." The sleigh was a deep box, six feet long by thirty-five inches broad, which slipped easily on the surface of the snow, when drawn by two horses tandem. There were, of course, no wagon roads in those days, but there were two regularly-traveled trails to Milwaukee. The one we took, lead first on a short cut southeast from Green Bay to Manitowoc. At Manitowoc rapids, two and a half miles from the lake shore, the path turned almost due south, striking the mouth of Sheboygan river. Thence, we would proceed up the lake, sometimes on 230 the beach and again on the high land, for fifteen or sixteen miles; thence, west southwest to Saukville,¹ a small Chippewa village, whose chief at that time was Wahmeteegoosh (Little Frenchman); thence directly southeast to Milwaukee, striking the Kilbourn—now the Waukesha—road. This path between Green Bay and Milwaukee was originally an Indian trail, and very crooked; but the whites would straighten it by cutting across lots each winter with their jumpers, wearing bare streaks through the thin covering, to be followed in the summer by foot and horseback travel along the shortened path. The other trail was by way of Fond du Lac, taking advantage of the military road along the east shore of Lake Winnebago; thence, south-southwest to Watertown; thence, east to Waukesha, and coming into Milwaukee on the Kilbourn road. The time occupied in traveling from Green Bay to Milwaukee was four days, either by foot or by French train,— the distance being estimated at 125 miles.

¹ On the Milwaukee river, about twenty-five miles above its mouth. In 1846, William Payne erected grist and saw-mills, and started a village there.— *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix., p. 394.— Ed.

My establishment in Milwaukee consisted of two sections,—one, a miscellaneous store for the use of the general public and the other a room where Indians could be separately

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waited on. In June, 1837, I sold out to James Russell, of Danville, Ill., and spent the summer in Green Bay and Mackinaw.²

² In the MS. Vieau papers, in the archives of the Society, is the commission of A. J. Vieau as "first lieutenant of the 9th company of the 3rd regiment, composed of the original county of Milwaukee." It is signed by Henry Dodge, territorial governor, at Mineral Point, June 1, 1887.— Ed.

I ought to mention, here, that just before the time I opened my place in Milwaukee, in the fall of 1836, I became interested in the first store in Waukesha county,—on the old Kilbourn road. The firm name was McDonald, Maliby and Vieau, and our store was on the Nathaniel Walton farm, near Prairieville,—afterwards the village of Waukesha. We had a good stock of goods of a general character, amounting, I should say, to some \$5,000 or \$6,000. In the 231 summer of 1837 we sold out to Solomon Juneau, who, I think, brought the goods back to Milwaukee and disposed of them. Thus I am entitled to the credit of helping establish the first store in that section.¹

¹ Western Hist. Co.'s *Hist. Waukesha Co.* (1880), p. 628, says: "The first store was erected by Solomon Juneau, not far from the present location of St. Joseph's Catholic church, in Waukesha. Juneau hired a clerk to run it, who dealt mostly in Indian goods and 'wolf tobacco.' This tobacco was also for the Indians, and was so named because it was said to be strong enough to kill a wolf. The store Was opened in the winter of 1836–37. Mr. Juneau sold goods here before that, however."— Ed.

In the fall of 1837, I returned to Milwaukee and spent the winter in helping to collect the county taxes.² The next spring I went into the lumber business and served as auctioneer. In the fall, I moved to Port Washington³ with a small stock of Indian goods and was appointed postmaster. A little settlement had been established here by Wooster Harrison and other Michigan City speculators, but the place had been starved out and practically abandoned. When I reached there, there were perhaps a dozen empty houses and stores,

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and a small deserted saw-mill. A post-office having been established, somebody had to hold the office of postmaster, so I took it for the winter. The only mail that ever arrived there during my term was for either my family or the family of Asa Case, up at Saukville. There were no other white people in that region.⁴

2 From documents in the Vieau collection, it appears that the narrator was commissioned early in December, 1837, both as tax collector for the town of Milwaukee and as collector of county taxes; as town collector, he was given five per cent, on all of his collections and levies.— Ed.

3 Then simply Washington. George C. Daniels named it Port Washington, in 1844. The financial crash of 1837 killed the place, which had been established by Harrison's party, on the "boom" basis, Sept. 7, 1835.— Ed.

4 West. Hist. Co.'s *Hist. Washington and Ozaukee Cos.* (1881), p. 508, says that Case had a trading hut at Port Washington, at that time; and that Aurora Adams kept a tavern there, as a half-way house on the trail between Sheboygan and Milwaukee. No mention is made of Vieau.— Ed.

In the spring of 1839, I closed up my post, bought a lot of sugar from the Indians, loaded a boat with the sugar and furs that I had collected and went up to Milwaukee, where I disposed of my venture, having had an excellent winter's trade. I had started in with only \$700 worth of goods. While at Port Washington, I would take in loads of turkeys, venison and other game by ox-team to Milwaukee, in which enterprise I was particularly successful.

When I left Milwaukee for the Port, my frame house in the former place was rented from me by Gov. Harrison Ludington, then a young man, newly married. With the results of my venture I now built two new houses and had money enough left in the fall of 1839 to go into business with Solomon Juneau, who had traded but little since I originally bought him out. In the spring of 1840, we dissolved partnership and divided our stock. That summer

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I bought and handled lumber from Two Rivers and other points, and dealt, as well, in dry goods, groceries and Indian supplies. This store was on the west side of East Water street, between Huron and Michigan.¹ I thus continued in trade in Milwaukee, and made money, until the fall of 1843, when I went to Two Rivers, [then called Twin Rivers] and took possession of John Lawe's old saw-mill there.² The place was then a small fishing village of some eight or ten houses, with perhaps twenty-five inhabitants. A part of the time I ran the mill myself, but leased it for the most part,—at first to Bascom and Ward; then, in 1844, to Daniel Smith of Manitowoc; in 1845, to H. H. Smith of Milwaukee, who finally bought the plant, about 1846. I also did some trading with the Indians while at Two Rivers.³

1 Among the Vieau MSS. is a lease, wherein A. J. Vieau agrees to rent “the store room in the west side of the building,” on lot 1, block 72, “town of Milwaukee, on the west side of the river,” belonging to W. T. Beebee, for \$9 per quarter, for one year from May 15, 1840.— Ed.

2 Erected in 1836. This old mill was said by a writer in 1881 to be “the sole representative of the lumber business in Two Rivers; it is still standing, but idle.” The builders were Robert M. Ebberts and John Lawe, of Green Bay; it was the nucleus of the town of Two Rivers, and the first white settler there, Oliver Lougrine, was the man who ran the mill. Lawe also entered a large tract of land on which the settlement was founded.— Ed.

3 From the Vieau MSS. it is ascertained that during the winter of 1846–47, the narrator was also postmaster at Two Rivers. Oscar Burdicke appears to have been the mail-carrier between Manitowoc and Two Rivers, at this time, his compensation being the net revenue of the route.— Ed.

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I then opened a farm of three hundred and twenty acres between Neshoto and Two Rivers. After a couple of years, I went to live in Neshoto village; was chairman of the Manitowoc county board and held other local offices. In 1851, I removed to Ashwaubenon,

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or South Fort Howard (private land claim No. 21, west side of Fox), where I still live. During the winter of 1851–52, I established a store at Cooperstown (now New Denmark), one-half way to Manitowoc. But it was a failure and I brought the goods back to Green Bay and sold them at auction. In 1858, I started a store in the Bay Settlement near the Catholic church, some nine miles northeast of here. After a season or two I retired to my little farm,—private claim No. 21, west side of Fox river,—and have been here ever since.

You have called my attention to the statement in the *History of Racine and Kenosha Counties* [West. Hist. Co., 1879, p. 286] that “a Frenchman named Jacques Jambeau” established a trading post “as early as 1832, at what was called Skunk Grove, in the northwestern part of Mount Pleasant township, Racine county, and there conducted a thrifty business With the Indians.”

My father was called Jean Beau, by the Indians, as I have said before, and this was frequently corrupted by Americans and Englishmen into Jambeau. Now, this early trader at Skunk Grove was not my father, as one might suppose, but Jacques Vieau, Jr., my brother, who came to be called Jacques Jambeau, as the Indians have a habit of naming sons after the father;—all of us Vieaus being called by them Jean Beau, or Jambeau, after our father, who was very popular with the Pottawattomies. My brother Jacques, whether called Vieau or Jambeau, has been frequently confounded with his father by writers on early history.

I do not know when it was that my brother Jacques went out to Skunk Grove, with my brother Louis as his partner, to trade and live with the Pottawattomies, among whom 234 they married. But I do know that they never had what might be called a regular trading post there. They carried on farming as well as trafficking, in a small way, at the Grove, and afterwards claimed their place under the preëmption law. When the Pottawattomies were removed, in 1837, Jacques and Louis sold out their claim and emigrated with the Indians to Council Bluffs, and then to Kansas, where they both died.

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I ought to tell you the tradition that exists among the French Creoles of Green Bay, as to the naming of Ashwaubenon creek and town. A prominent young Ottawa Indian arrived from Mackinaw, in early days. He was the son of a chief at L'Arbor Croche, near Mackinaw, and came here with Jacob Franks, in 1795. He was apparently much attached to the whites and their habits, was peaceable, intelligent, brave and handsome. Upon the arrival of the young Ottawa at Green Bay, he courted the acquaintance of Ahkeeneebéway (Standing Earth),¹ who was an old Menomonee chief on the west side of the river, in what is now Fort Howard; the latter took the new comer into his family and made much of him, for he had pleasing ways and was indeed a fine fellow, as Indians go.

¹ Standing Earth was the father of Mrs. Joseph le Roy, hence the great-grandfather of the narrator. See *ante*, p. 220, note 3.— Ed.

The Chippewas lived on Lake Shawano, in those days. Occasionally they would come to Green Bay on a spree, for the Menomonees and Chippewas were always friendly. One day in the month of June, a year or two after Mr. Franks came, a number of young Menomonee squaws went out blueberrying. They had quite a frolic among themselves, but finally one of them was missing. The girls made a diligent search for their comrade, but finally gave up in despair and were obliged to return to their village and report the loss to her parents. For several days, the search was repeated, until at last a trail was discovered, going westward.

Then the old warriors declared that the girl had been kidnapped ²³⁵ by the Chippewas; and so it proved to be. Old Standing Earth at once sent runners through his village and soon there was a crowd at the council house, where the pipe of deliberation was smoked and the affair discussed in all its bearings. It was concluded that a party of fifty warriors should be sent to the Chippewa village on Lake Shawano, to demand the captive and bring her back. Standing Earth, presiding at the council, called for volunteers, asking those who wished to go upon this expedition to come over and sit down by his side. It was not long before there were enough for the purpose. The young Ottawa had been the first to

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respond. Then said Standing Earth, "It only remains for me to select a leader for the party;" and turning to the Ottawa, he continued, "My son, you shall take charge of this party and whatever you do will be right." The Ottawa, much confused, replied, "My father, I do not know as I am worthy of undertaking such a responsibility; you have other warriors, and perhaps I ought not to accept; but if it is your will, I will accept and do the best I can." Standing Earth insisted, and all the warriors were glad that the young man was to be their leader.

The party started out. They reached Lake Shawano a little before night and slept in the bush a half mile from the Chippewa village. At daybreak the leader said to his warriors, "Keep still. I will myself go into the village. Do not stir till I give the war whoop. But when I do give it, then strike, cut and kill. Meanwhile do not stir." So the brave Ottawa crept through the bushes, in the early morning, when the Chippewa hunters had gone out into the woods to kill game for the morning meal. Softly he slid into the silent village and lifted the mat over the door of the first wigwam he came to. Peering in, he could see nothing of the missing girl. And so he lifted the mats and peered in at the doors of several lodges, as he crouched and crept along, until at last he was rewarded. She was sitting at the further end of a long lodge. Several old women were squatting around a fire, between him and the object of his search. He dropped the mat behind him and quickly stepping up to the girl motioned her to follow him. While he was passing out with his prize, the women did not stir from their places, but they gave him vicious sidelong looks, full of hate and silent threats. He paused for a moment, on the outside, much tempted to go back and tomahawk them; but he refrained from doing so, and rejoined his party with the girl.

At Fox Hill, two miles west of the Fox river, they were met by a large party of welcoming Menomonees, whom runners had notified of the result of the expedition. That night, there was great jollification among all the Menomonees hereabouts.

A council was held, the following day, in the presence of all. Old Standing Earth gave to the brave Ottawa a new name,—Ashawaubomay, meaning "Side looks," in remembrance

of the ugly glances which the old Chippewa women had given him. His name, up to this time, had been Little Crow. Standing Earth, who was noted for his sagacity, greatly praised the forbearance displayed by Ashawaubomay in not tomahawking the old women and thus opening a bloody quarrel between the Chippewas and Menomonees; he then said: "My son, you are a young man; I wish to see you prosper; you are entitled to choose two of the prettiest squaws in the village. Now choose!" Thereupon Ashawaubomay replied: "If I was a double man, I would want two wives; but being single, I want but one." Standing Earth smiled and said: "Choose, then!" And Ashawaubomay then declared, "I take your youngest daughter, Wahbenukqua (Morning Star)." There was great rejoicing in the camp when Standing Earth ordered his beautiful daughter brought forward, and told her that Ashawaubomay was henceforth to be her husband. That the young chief might not be without a home, Standing Earth gave him a grant of land, running from the Ashwaubenon river to the foot of Depere rapids, a mile long, on the west side of the river, and running back some three miles. Part of this claim, Ashawaubomay afterwards gave to Mrs. John Lawe; and other portions to Mrs. La Rose and Mrs. Franks. All of these formally located their claims and they were ratified by government.¹

¹ On Isaac Lee's map of the land-claims at Green Bay, in 1821, *Amer. State Papers—Public Lands*, iv.—the creek is styled "Chewabiney river," and the territory described in Mr. Vieau's story is there platted as claims Nos. 25, 26 and 27, held by Thérèse Rankins, Thérèse Larose and Susan Larose, respectively. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, x., pp. 93, 94, for reference to Achoabeme, probably the hero of this tale.—Ed.

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The morning after the council, Ashawaubomay and his beautiful young squaw went in a canoe up the river, to the south side of the creek, quite near its mouth, and located. They raised a large family of children and lived as nearly like whites as possible. They were warm friends of old Judge Charles Reaume and lived with him much of the time.

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Ashawaubomay was indeed a fine Indian,— quite like a white man. He was buried on his little farm, on the shore of the creek.

Some fifteen years ago, I attempted to give the name of this Ottawa Indian to the town in which I live. But the county board got the name all mixed up, and the town goes by the title of Ashwaubenon, which doesn't mean anything at all. But such has been the fate of too many geographical names, of Indian origin, when falling into the hands of people in authority, who have no care for historical accuracy.